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Food and Home Notes

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FOOD CLIPS

Economy-minded USDA home economists say the least expensive styles of vegetables are diced, short cuts, or pieces. Whole vegetables usually cost more than cut styles because it is hard to keep these fragile products whole during processing.

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When buying frozen vegetables, you should make sure the package is firm. Don't buy soft, limp, wet, or sweating packages; these are signs that the vegetables have defrosted or are in the process of defrosting.

* * *

What is the "blossom end" of the fruit? It usually refers to the bottom end which is more rounded.

* * *

The background color of a fruit before the sun's rays cause the skin to color is called "ground color". It's often seen beneath and between the surface coloration of the fruit.

* * *

"Russetting" is a lacy, brownish, blemish-type coating on top of the skin of fruits. It does not affect the eating quality of the fruit.

* * *

Making chicken salad? Buy a stewing chicken. If cooked properly, this older chicken can be just as tender as a young chicken.

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ON WINE

....IN MISSISSIPPI

Grape growing and processing may become important to the economy of Mississippi, according to the Science and Education Administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Last year Mississippians paid around \$7 million to out-of-state grape growers and processors, plus many more dollars on fresh grapes, jellies, jam, marmalade and unfermented grape juice.

After extensive research with approximately 80 varieties of grapes, the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station has discovered that Muscadine grapes (which are native to the Southeast) grow as berries, range in color from bronze to red and black...and have highly-favored juice. The Muscadines also have resistance to disease and offer high yields per plant and per acre.

The Muscadine wine has a distinct flavor and scores high with taste-test panels. In addition to wine, other grape products---unfermented juices, jams, jellies, canned grapes, pie filling and even grape ice cream---may be made from this type of grape.

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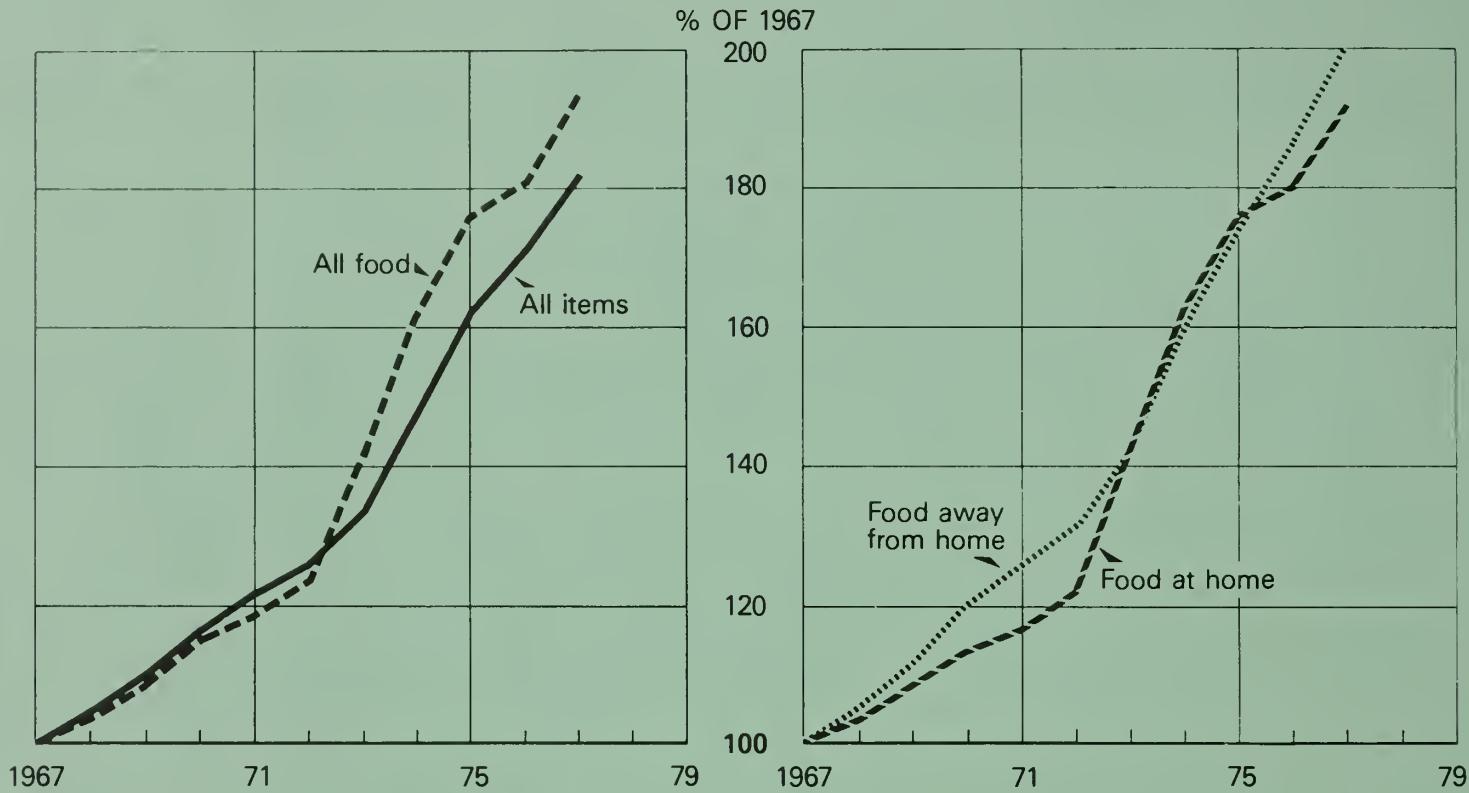
CONSUMER PRICES

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all items was 181.8 in June 1977, or 6.9 percent higher than a year earlier. Between 1967 and 1972, the index for food prices advanced more slowly than the all-items index. The rapid food price increases of 1973 and 1974, however, moved the food index ahead of the all-items index, where it has remained although food prices have mod-

erated somewhat in recent years.

During the last decade, prices for food away from home have generally increased more rapidly than prices for food at home. The June 1977 index for food away from home was 200.6, compared with an index of 191.9 for food at home. Consumers are using a greater percentage of their food dollars away from home.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: FOOD



SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS 1977 JUNE INDEX

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX¹

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977 ²
Percent of 1967								
All items	116.3	121.3	125.3	133.1	147.7	161.2	170.5	181.8
Food	114.9	118.4	123.5	141.4	161.7	175.4	180.8	193.6
At home	113.7	116.4	121.6	141.4	162.4	175.8	179.5	191.9
Away from home	119.9	126.1	131.1	141.4	159.4	174.3	186.1	200.6
Housing	118.9	124.3	129.2	135.0	150.6	166.8	177.2	189.0
Apparel and upkeep	116.1	119.8	122.3	126.8	136.2	142.3	147.6	153.9
Medical care	120.6	128.4	132.5	137.7	150.5	168.6	184.7	201.8
Transportation	112.7	118.6	120.0	123.8	137.3	150.6	165.5	179.2

¹ Includes shelter, fuel, utilities, household furnishings, and operation. ² June 1977.

1977 Handbook of Agricultural Charts - Agriculture Handbook No. 524

Available to the PRESS --

Single copies of the "Handbook of Agricultural Charts" (Agriculture Handbook No. 524) are available, while supply lasts, for media people who frequently refer to agricultural charts. Write to the Editor of Food and Home Notes for your copy.

ON TAKING CARE OF PETS

--- AND TRAVELING

If you are planning to ship the family dog or cat or other pet by air, you need to know some of the new rules that could affect your personal pet, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. First, dogs and cats must be at least 8 weeks old and have been weaned for at least five days before they may be accepted for shipment by an airline.

The cage must be large enough for the animal to stand up, turn around, and lie down with normal posture and body movements;

and---

--strong enough to withstand shipping, free of interior protrusions that could cause injury, and with adequate access to the animal;

--constructed with a solid, leakproof bottom, and provided with litter or absorbant material unless a wire or other nonsolid floor separates the animal from the bottom

--ventilated adequately on at least two opposite sides so that the air flows through both the upper and lower parts of the walls...there must be projecting rims or knobs on the outside to keep ventilation from being blocked by adjacent cargo;

--fitted with handles or grips for proper handling, and marked "Live animals" with arrows indicating the upright position.

Dogs and cats must not be brought to the carrier for shipping more than 4 hours before the time of departure (6 hours is permitted if shipping arrangements have been made in advance).

Dogs and cats must have food at least every 24 hours and water at least every 12 hours. And--it is a good idea to have a licensed veterinarian examine your pet within 10 days of shipping it.

(Copies of the Federal regulation concerning animal shipments may be obtained from Animal Care, APHIS, USDA, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.)

SOLAR ENERGY — AND FOOD

Solar energy may have the most potential for efficient food processing in the future. But, how--and by what methods? A program, managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and funded by the Energy and Development Administration, is developing research on proposals in six locations. Originally funded in 1976, this program is being continued through 1978 in seeking successful methods of using solar energy in food processing.



Two new projects for 1978 include the drying of seafood (specifically mullet roe and fish fillets) and the drying of surface moisture from washed and waxed oranges from citrus packinghouses being prepared for fresh market distribution.

Other research includes:

- Economics and possible fuel saving by solar water heaters under mid-western climatic conditions (Michigan State University);
- Hot water and steam demand of selected food processing industries; meat processing, dairy, and vegetable canning plants (University of Wisconsin);
- Development and demonstration of solar process drying of potato products (Colorado State University);
- Drying food materials by direct applications of solar energy (Oklahoma State);
- Air drying, freeze-drying and osmocac dehydration of foods with solar energy (University of Hawaii);
- Dehydration of southeastern fruits and vegetables by solar energy (U.S. Citrus and Subtropical Products Laboratory, Winter Haven, Florida).

Project leader for the entire program is Dr. Robert E. Berry, USDA Research in Winter Haven, Florida.